

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SUVA 01696 080042Z
ACTION L-03

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 CA-01 JUSE-00 /015 W
-----006943 080051Z /21

P 072000Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY SUVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7893
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, CPRS
SUBJECT: EXTRADITION: JOHN HERBERT MEIER

REF: A) CANBERRA 7112, B) STATE 22502

1. UPON RECEIPT REF B CONSULAR OFFICER TELEPHONED TONGA AND SPOKE WITH SECRETARY TO GOVT, DAN TUFUI, RE STATUS OF MEIER'S DIPLOMATIC PASSPORT. TUFUI TOLD CONOFF HE HAD ASKED MINISTER OF POLICE TO REVOKE MEIER'S PASSPORT, BUT TO HIS KNOWLEDGE (AND APPARENT IRRITATION) ACTION HAD NOT YET BEEN TAKEN. TUFUI SAID GOVT OF TONGA HAD EXPECTED MEIER TO RETURN TO TONGA AT WHICH TIME THEY WOULD HAVE LIFTED PASSPORT, BUT MEIER HAD NOT RETURNED. HE SAID HE WOULD ATTEMPT TO REACH MINISTER OF POLICE (WHO HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR PASSPORT CONTROL AND IMMIGRATION). TUFUI AND CONOFF ARRANGED TO SPEAK AGAIN TOMORROW, 8 SEPT.

2. EMBASSY HAS ALSO SPOKEN WITH AUSTRALIAN DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER IN SUVA WHO SAID HIGH COMMISSION ON 1 SEPT HAD SENT CABLE TO TUFUI QUERYING HIM RE DIPLOMATIC STATUS OF MEIER AND RECEIVED ANSWERS VIA CABLE SIGNED SEC GOVT ON 6 SEPT AS FOLLOWS:
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(A) WHEN DOES MEIER'S DIPLOMATIC PASSPORT EXPIRE?
9 OCT 1978
(B) IS MEIER ACCREDITED TO AUSTRALIA OR ANY OTHER COUNTRY IN A DIPLOMATIC CAPACITY? NO.
(C) IS MEIER ON HIS WAY TO OR FROM A DIPLOMATIC POSTING?
NO.
(D) IS MEIER A DIPLOMATIC COURIER? NO.

3. AUSTRALIANS HERE BELIEVE THA ANSWERS TO THEIR QUESTIONS WERE PROVIDED BY THE KING. THEY ARE PUZZLED BY 9 OCT EXPIRATION DATE AND WERE OFFERED NO EXPLANATION OF DATE IN COMMUNICATION FROM TONGA. (ACCORDING TO THEIR VISA FILES, MEIER'S TONGAN PASSPORT HAD EXPIRATION DATE OF 23 MAY 1983.) WE ARE NOW PUZZLED THAT TUFUI DID NOT MENTION 9 OCT IN CONVERSATION WITH CONOFF.

4. AUSTRALIAN UNDERSTANDING OF THE KING'S ANNOUNCED INTENTION TO REVOKE PASSPORT WAS THAT IT WOULD BE REVOKED IF AND WHEN MEIER RETURNED TO TONGA. THEY HAD HEARD, HOWEVER, FRO NEW ZEALANDERS THAT TONGANS WOULD REVOKE PASSPORT AT TIME OF COURT APPEARANCE SHOULD MEIER AGAIN BE ARRESTED. AUSTRALIANS ARE NOW DOUBTFUL ABOUT TONGAN WILLINGNESS TO TAKE THAT ACTION SINCE 9 OCT EXPIRATION DATE HAS BEEN COMMUNICATED TO THEM.

5. EMBASSY WILL CONTACT TONGAN SECRETARY TO GOVT ON 8 SEPT AND REPORT ANY FURTHER INFORMATION OBTAINED.
CONDON

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NNN

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